



Department of
Education

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AN ROINN
Oideachais

MÄNNYSTRIE O
Lear

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2015/16 BUSINESS PLAN

“Every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.”

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Introduction

This business plan reflects the key priorities and objectives for the Department of Education (DE) during 2015/16 under the following 6 corporate goals:

- **Raising standards for all** – through high quality teaching and learning, ensuring that all young people enjoy and do well in their education and that their progress is assessed and their attainment recognised, including through qualifications.
- **Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality** – addressing the underachievement that exists in our education system; ensuring that young people who face barriers or are at risk of social exclusion are supported to achieve to their full potential; and ensuring that our education service is planned effectively on an area basis to provide pupils with full access to the curriculum and Entitlement Framework.
- **Developing the education workforce** – recognising the particular professional role of teachers and school leaders in delivering an effective curriculum and raising standards and also the important role of other education professionals and those who support them.
- **Improving the learning environment** – making sure that strategic investment supports the delivery of the area plans; that the premises in which young people learn are safe, fit for purpose and conducive to learning; and that the environment provides opportunities for sharing and for building a more cohesive society.

- **Transforming the governance and management of education** – ensuring that the arrangements for governing and managing education here are modern, accountable and child-centred and that education services are delivered efficiently and effectively in support of schools.
- **Discharging our corporate responsibilities effectively** – ensuring that the specific corporate responsibilities that rest with it as a government department are effectively and efficiently discharged.

The Department's annual business plan is published on its website. It is subject to review to take account of any issues that may affect achievement of targets and progress in delivering on commitments is monitored regularly by the Departmental Board. An end-year progress report will also be published on the website.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16

CORPORATE GOAL 1: RAISING STANDARDS FOR ALL

Commitments and indicators in blue relate to commitments and/or 2014/15 milestones in the Programme for Government 2011-15

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Early Years	Sufficient pre-school places available so that every child can be offered a place	1.1 Ensure sufficient level of provision to meet demand.	Families and Communities
		1.2 Review the prioritising criteria for allocation of places to ensure that they adequately prioritise low income families, including low paid working parents.	
	Reduced non participation rates	1.3 Review responses from parents who chose not to participate in the pre-school admission process and explore any potential barriers to parents applying for funded pre-school provision by end September 2015.	
	Early years education strengthened and developed	1.4 Progress implementation of the framework for early years 'Learning to Learn' to strengthen and develop early years education and implement key actions.	
		1.5 Review and progress the findings of the independent review of Sure Start by end March 2016.	

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
		1.6 Oversee and contribute to early years cross-departmental work stream and projects including Together: Building a United Community (TBUC), North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), British-Irish Council, Atlantic Philanthropies funded projects etc.	Families and Communities
		1.7 Further develop the 'Getting Ready to Learn' work stream as part of the Delivering Social Change (DSC) signature programme Early Intervention Transformation Programme to provide additional opportunities for parents to develop and maintain a supportive home learning environment.	

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Pupil attainment	<p>Increase the % pupils attaining at or above the expected levels in Communication and Using Maths at the end of Key Stage 2¹ to 82.2% and 82.9%, respectively; and</p> <p>Increase the % of pupils attaining at or above the expected levels in Communication and Using Maths at the end of Key Stage 3 to 76.9% and 79.1%, respectively</p> <p>Increase the % of school leavers attaining 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSEs in Maths and English² to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63% in 2013/14 • 66% in 2014/15 • 67% in 2015/16 <p>Increase the percentage of school leavers achieving GCSE Grades A*-C in English and Maths</p>	1.8 Continue throughout the year to implement the school improvement policy, <i>Every School a Good School</i> .	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards

¹ During the financial year 2015/16 the most recent performance data will relate to the 2014/15 academic year.

² During the financial year 2015/16 the most recent performance data will relate to the 2013/14 academic year.

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
	<p>Ensure that a minimum of 35% of school leavers achieve at least 3 A levels at A*-C (or equivalent)</p> <p>Increase % of school leavers with at least 2 A levels at grades A*-E (or equivalent)³ to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% in 2013/14 • 56% in 2014/15 • 59.3% in 2015/16 	<p>1.9 Continue throughout the year to implement 'Count, Read: Succeed', and associated programmes, including the Key Stage 2/3 Literacy and Numeracy Continuing Professional Development (CPD).</p> <p>1.10 On a regular basis throughout the year, monitor and challenge the Education Authority (EA) and DE's other Arm's Length Bodies' (ALB) targets and actions to improve performance at sub-system level through Governance and Accountability Review meetings.</p>	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards
Curriculum	<p>From September 2015, all grant-aided post-primary schools are supported to deliver a broad, balanced and coherent curricular offer that includes at least 24 courses at KS4 and at least 27 courses post-16 and meets the statutory requirements around applied/general</p>	<p>1.11 To provide transitional funding to Area Learning Communities to support delivery of the Entitlement Framework.</p>	

³ During the financial year 2015/16 the most recent performance data will relate to the 2013/14 academic year.

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
	balance.	1.12 Monitor delivery, and work with the EA to support areas where schools may not meet statutory requirements.	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards
	The effective implementation of the statutory curriculum	1.13 By December 2015 evaluate the pilots for the expansion of Area Learning Communities into supporting the delivery of the curriculum between the primary and post-primary phases.	
	An increase in the proportion of A-Level Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) examination entries in 2015/16 cohort, from a baseline of 40.9% (Proportion of A-Level Examination Entries in STEM subjects in 2011/12)	1.14 Throughout the year identify and support appropriate intervention programmes to increase interest in and take-up of STEM subjects.	
Assessment	Functional assessment arrangements at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, maximising the proportion of schools reporting levels to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)	1.15 Throughout the year ensure that statutory assessment arrangements continue to support the delivery of the statutory Curriculum and DE policy objectives.	
	Evidence of DE activity in response to policy options and recommendations described within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) review of evaluation and assessment in education report	1.16 Throughout the year engage with relevant stakeholders on the refinement of policy developments associated with the policy options and recommendations contained in the OECD review of evaluation and assessment in education report.	Planning and Performance Management

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
School Evaluation and improvement	The consistent implementation of <i>Every School a Good School</i> , the Department's school improvement policy	1.17 Throughout the year every school inspection includes a focus on retention rates and what schools are doing to meet the needs of every child.	Education and Training Inspectorate
		1.18 Following discussion of operational implementation, complete the revision of the Formal Intervention Process to increase its robustness and responsiveness to the needs of pupils and working with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the EA, agree a revised process during 2015/16.	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards
		1.19 Throughout the year promote improvement through the whole-school inspection of at least 220 school and pre-school settings, and at least 10 youth settings.	Education and Training Inspectorate
		1.20 Ensure all schools address the Areas for Improvement identified during inspection.	
		1.21 Throughout the year undertake further collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Inspectorate in relation to north/south professional development, inspector exchanges and joint literacy and numeracy work.	
		1.22 Develop, in conjunction with stakeholders, a dashboard of measures for school evaluation. A panel of practitioners shall be established to	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
		make a recommendation on the way forward by the end of December 2015.	
Qualifications	A broad range of suitable and robust qualifications available to pupils in schools here	1.23 Throughout the year take forward both short-term and long-term actions flowing from the fundamental review of qualifications.	

CORPORATE GOAL 2: CLOSING THE PERFORMANCE GAP, INCREASING ACCESS AND EQUALITY

Commitments and indicators in blue relate to commitments and/or 2014/15 milestones in the Programme for Government 2011-15

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Promoting Equality of Opportunity		2.1 During 2015/16 continue to deliver the commitments in the Department's Equality Scheme.	Equality and All Ireland
Special Educational Needs	Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) achieving in line with their potential	2.2 Support the progress of the SEN and Disability (SEND) Bill through the Assembly. By May 2015 agree arrangements for SEN supports in early years settings. By January 2016 issue draft SEND Regulations for consultation. By January 2016 issue draft SEN Code of Practice for consultation.	Access, Inclusion and Well Being
		2.3 Continue to work with other departments and relevant bodies, throughout the year, regarding the implementation of DE specific 2015/16 autism actions, as outlined in the NI Executive's Autism Strategy and Action Plan.	
Youth Work	Youth work services strategically aligned to education priorities, planned and delivered according to robust assessment of need	2.4 During 2015/16 progress implementation of 'Priorities for Youth' with the support of key sectoral partners.	Families and Communities
		2.5 By autumn 2015 complete a consultation exercise on the future of the Youth Council. By March 2016, subject to Ministerial agreement, commence any changes required to the current legislation as appropriate.	
Addressing Barriers to	Reduce the % of half days missed because	2.6 Reduce the % of half days missed because of unauthorised absence in primary schools by 0.5% and in post primary schools by	Access, Inclusion and Well Being

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Learning	of unauthorised absence	0.5%.	
		2.7 Secure an increase in the overall attendance rate to: 94.3% in 2014/15 94.6% in 2015/16.	
		2.8 Secure an increase in the overall attendance rate in schools with currently less than 90% attendance.	
	Reduce the % of half days missed because of unauthorised absence	2.9 Develop an attendance strategy and deliver the commitments outlined in the Memorandum of Reply (to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Report on Improving Pupil Attendance) published on 4 August 2014 for implementation in the 2015/16 school year.	
	Operational support of 30 Nurture Units (20 DSC / 10 existing), support for external evaluation and policy development.	2.10 In conjunction with the Department for Social Development, ensure ongoing delivery of the Nurture Units project until March 2016. In particular, DE will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate the £1.6m secured 'change fund' funding to maintain the operation of the 30 funded schools until an informed decision on mainstream funding can be taken; • By November 2015 complete the evaluation of the effectiveness of nurture by Queen's University Belfast (QUB); and • By March 2016 develop a DE Nurture policy based on the outcome of QUB's evaluation (and bid for future funding as required). 	
	Increase % of Free School Meals	2.11 In the context of implementing 'Count, Read: Succeed', implement proposals to significantly improve literacy levels and	Curriculum, Qualifications and

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
	Entitlement (FSME) pupils attaining 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSEs in English and Maths ⁴ to 45% in 2013/14 49% in 2014/15 49% in 2015/16	thereby contribute to addressing multi-generational disadvantage.	Standards
		2.12 Work with DES to share experience and develop good practice in addressing educational underachievement in the context of the NSMC Educational Underachievement Working Group. Meetings to be scheduled twice a year.	
		2.13 Throughout the year support the implementation of the Entitlement Framework underpinned by a refreshed Careers Strategy to be published by June 2015.	
	Increase the % of Looked After Children leaving school with at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSEs in English and Maths	2.14 Continue collaborative work with the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and the Education Welfare Service to embed the use of Personal Education Plans and to ensure that there is sufficient guidance available to support schools in educating Looked After Children and ensuring the Looked After Child's needs are met.	Access, Inclusion and Well Being
		2.15 Continue work on the development of a Looked After Children Policy with the aim of introducing a policy during the 2015/16 school year.	
		2.16 Through these actions increase the % of Looked After Children leaving school with at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths above the 2012/13 position of 27%.	

⁴ During the financial year 2015/16 the most recent performance data will relate to the 2013/14 academic year.

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Sustainable Schools	Area planning for Sustainable Schools	2.17 By 31 December 2015 review planned actions arising from area plans and annual area profiles with the planning authorities to ensure area needs considered and potential Development Proposals identified and progressed.	Area Planning
		2.18 During the year process the majority of Development Proposals within 6 weeks of the end of the statutory objection period.	
		2.19 Following report publication progress implementation of agreed recommendations arising from the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on Sustainability of Schools.	
		2.20 By 31 March 2016 develop and implement new Area Planning processes and guidance for the EA.	
		2.21 Throughout the year implement and support area planning governance structures.	
		2.22 Throughout the year establish links with new district council community planning fora, the EA as statutory community planning partner and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools as a planning authority with regard to the Department's statutory duty to, where possible, promote and encourage community planning and have regard to community plans.	
Support for families	Free School Meal Entitlement	2.23 Take the necessary steps to implement required changes as a result of Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Credit being agreed by the Assembly.	Families and Communities
Anti-Bullying	Introduction of Anti-Bullying Legislation	2.24 Continue to progress Anti-Bullying Legislation, looking to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude drafting and introduce the Bill by May 2015; • Achieve second reading before Summer Recess; 	Access, Inclusion and Wellbeing

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude Committee stage by end of November 2015; • Obtain Executive agreement to Bill by end of December 2015; and • Complete Consideration stages by end of January 2016⁵. 	
Encouraging and facilitating Integrated and Irish medium education	The Department's policies and programmes appropriately reflect and support these duties	2.25 During 2015/16 monitor the outworking of guidance previously provided to directorates on review of policies, programmes and ALB business plans to identify and share examples of best practice.	Collaborative Education and Practice
Controlled schools' support body	The Controlled Schools' Support Council is established	2.26 To provide funding to the Controlled Schools' Support Council to deliver the functions agreed by the Executive on 9 September 2014 by December 2015.	Education Authority Delivery

⁵ This is dependent upon the timeliness of legislative drafting, Executive approval and the legislative process within the Assembly.

CORPORATE GOAL 3: DEVELOPING THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Commitments and indicators in blue relate to commitments and/or 2014/15 milestones in the Programme for Government 2011-15

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Strengthening the Workforce	A flexible, responsive education workforce	3.1 Work with employers and the recognised education trade unions to re-shape and embed new negotiating machinery with a focus on flexibility and accountability by April 2016.	Education Workforce Development
		3.2 Monitor the implementation of the Teacher Attendance Strategy and work with employers to develop an overarching Education Workforce Attendance Strategy by April 2016.	
		3.3 During 2015/16 lead the Strategic Cost Base Reduction Exercises across the Education Sector caused by the Westminster Government's cut to the Block Grant.	
		3.4 By April 2016 introduce legislation for the Northern Ireland Teachers Pension Scheme to further improve the reformed Northern Ireland Teachers Pension Scheme introduced 1 April 2015.	
	Positive Industrial Relations environment enabling workforce development to be managed effectively	3.5 During 2015/16 maintain and build upon the good working relations established with internal and external stakeholders particularly through the agreed negotiating machinery, and the Strategic Forum.	
		3.6 During 2015/16 further refine the pay remit process to enable education sector staff to receive their contractual entitlements in a timely manner.	

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
		3.7 During 2015/16 pay teachers and pensioners accurately and on time, in accordance with statutory and audit requirements.	
Professional Development / School leadership	An improved focus on professional development	3.8 In autumn 2015 finalise and publish a new strategy for teacher professional development to include an implementation plan for the first phase of a 10 year programme to strengthen professional learning for teachers and to promote strong and effective leadership.	Collaborative Education and Practice

CORPORATE GOAL 4: IMPROVING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Commitments and indicators in blue relate to commitments and/or 2014/15 milestones in the Programme for Government 2011-15

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Shared Education	Shared Education Bill introduced to Assembly	4.1 Bring forward legislation to define shared education and place powers on Department and relevant ALBs to encourage and facilitate shared education in line with the following timescale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the Bill by May 2015; Achieve second reading before Summer Recess; Conclude Committee stage by end of November 2015; Obtain Executive agreement to Bill by end of December 2015; and Complete Consideration stages by end of January 2016. 	Collaborative Education and Practice
	% increase in pupils engaged in shared education	4.2 Progress a second call for schools to apply for funding through the DSC Shared Education Signature Project to further extend and embed opportunities for shared education.	
	% increase in schools sharing facilities	4.3 Identify successful second call shared campus projects under the Executive's TBUC strategy to be announced by the Minister by June 2015.	Area Planning
		4.4 Following announcement, progress business cases and act as project board members for first and second call shared campus projects throughout the year.	Area Planning/ Investment and Infrastructure
	Phase 1 substantially complete and Phase	4.5 Substantially complete Phase 1 (Arvalee School and Resource Centre) by year end.	Strule Shared Education Campus

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
	2 designs progressed for the Strule Shared Education Campus Omagh	4.6 Appoint Integrated Consultancy Team by September 2015.	Strule Shared Education Campus
		4.7 Complete the review of the Stage C design by the next Integrated Consultancy Team by December 2015.	
		4.8 Commence Royal Institute of British Architects Stage 3 design by January 2016.	
		4.9 Agree Memorandum of Agreement with school trustees/managing authorities covering campus ownership, governance and management by September 2015.	
		4.10 Throughout the year, progress the development of the Campus Educational Model to include developing a vision and associated workstreams, carrying out a curriculum review, developing a common timetable and staff engagement.	
		4.11 Work with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) to ensure the Vesting Order is progressed and detailed design and contract documentation is completed for the Strathroy Link Road in line with DRD programme (construction contract award expected early 2016).	
Strategic Investment	Prioritised capital works programme delivered within timescale and budget	4.12 At 31 March 2016 have successfully delivered, in conjunction with the EA, a programme of prioritised capital works covering Major Works, Schools Enhancement Programme and Minor Works.	Investment and Infrastructure
	Publication of DE Asset Management Plan	4.13 Publish DE Asset Management Plan by 31 October 2015.	Investment and Infrastructure

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Irish medium post primary planning	Provision of additional Irish medium post-primary schools	4.14 Throughout 2015/16 take forward agreed actions following the review of Irish medium post primary education.	Collaborative Education and Practice
Digital Technologies	All grant-aided schools continuing to have access to a high level of ICT provision	4.15 Throughout 2015/16 ensure the provision of effective, centrally managed digital services to assist teaching, learning, educational improvement and management (contract in place providing services). By June 2015 secure the provision to schools of 15,400 teacher portable devices. By September 2015 secure the provision of C2k Services to all Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) settings. During the 2014/15 academic year provide 325 schools with access to new library software (the remainder of schools receiving the software during the 2015/16 academic year).	Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards
School Funding	Arrangements for delegating funding to schools that are transparent, equitable and supportive of the Department's wider policy objectives	4.16 By the end of November 2015 complete a review of the Funding Authority arrangements for voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools and identify the most appropriate way for them to be funded.	Finance
		4.17 Keep the funding arrangements for schools under review, to ensure they continue to deliver the Department's policy objectives, including area based planning and sustainability, and demonstrate value for money.	Area Planning / Finance

CORPORATE GOAL 5: TRANSFORMING THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

Commitments and indicators in blue relate to commitments and/or 2014/15 milestones in the Programme for Government 2011-15

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Reform of Education Administration	Effective education administration and support in place for 2015/16	5.1 Ensure that the agreed programme of work is progressed by 31 March 2016 in accordance with the Department of Finance and Personnel Central Procurement Directorate's best practise guidance on programme management, by DE and EA to support the establishment and operation of the EA.	Education Authority Delivery
Children's Services	Work progressed in accordance with agreed timescales	5.2 Progress the work needed to create a new Department of Education that includes responsibility for children's services as part of the wider reform of Northern Ireland Civil Service departments.	Equality and All Ireland
Other ALBs	Governance and accountability arrangements in the Department's remaining ALBs are appropriate and effective	5.3 By March 2016 implement recommendations arising from the Review of ALB Governance Framework and Management Information.	Planning and Performance Management
		5.4 Monitor the implementation of the new arrangements for governance and business planning for Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education to satisfy the Department's duty to encourage and facilitate the development of both Irish medium and Integrated education.	Collaborative Education and Practice
North-south joint working	Improved cross border collaboration and delivery	5.5 Continue to work effectively and collaboratively with DES in taking forward the priorities agreed by both Ministers at the NSMC Educational Sectoral meeting.	Equality and All Ireland

Area	Key Success Indicator	Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
Procurement	Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) Accreditation achieved for education sector procurement	5.6 Engage with key stakeholders to oversee the implementation of agreed proposals for new procurement arrangements for the education sector to ensure CoPE accreditation is achieved at the earliest practicable opportunity.	Planning and Performance Management

CORPORATE GOAL 6: DISCHARGING OUR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES EFFECTIVELY

Commitment/Action	Lead Directorate
6.1 Continue the implementation of the Department's Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2014-17 by taking forward agreed initiatives in the 2015/16 HR Action Plan and measuring and evaluating impacts.	Equality and All Ireland
6.2 Fulfil effectively our statutory duties in relation to equality and good relations.	
6.3 Provide an efficient and effective service to the Minister in relation to Ministerial, Executive, Assembly, NSMC and British Irish Council business. This includes providing a high quality and responsive communications service to the Minister and the Department.	
6.4 Throughout the year manage the Department's budget to optimise the use of available resources and ensure that education bodies are not in breach of the financial control framework.	Finance
6.5 Effectively manage Departmental sickness absence to ensure an average of no more than 7.8 days per employee.	Equality and All Ireland
6.6 Throughout the year ensure that robust fraud management arrangements are in place within the Department and its ALBs to identify, evaluate and appropriately manage the risk of fraud and if fraud does occur to take firm action against the perpetrators.	Planning and Performance Management
6.7 Manage information effectively and securely, in line with NICS policies and the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.	Equality and All Ireland
6.8 Throughout the year ensure that our work in producing education statistics is delivered in full accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (this is a statutory requirement for those of our statistics which have achieved National Statistics designation).	Planning and Performance Management
6.9 Throughout the year implement the Department's commitments to PAC in accordance with the established timescales.	